

In memoriam BIRGER PEJLER (1924–1999)



Professor BIRGER PEJLER died in Uppsala, Sweden, on 5 November 1999 at the age of 75. He was born in Örebro on 3 February 1924 but came to Uppsala as a young man to study zoology, botany and geography at the University. Inspired by Prof. SVEN EKMAN he made field studies of zooplankton in Swedish Lapland and continued these studies in Swedish lowland lakes. His PhD thesis in zoology at Uppsala University in 1957, “*Studies on the taxonomy and ecology of planktonic Rotatoria*”, dealt mainly with the planktonic rotifers from the lakes of northern and central Sweden but also with general aspects of evolution in the Rotatoria. After graduation he held positions as lecturer in zoology at Uppsala and at Göteborg Universities before taking a lectureship at Kenya Science Teachers College in Nairobi, 1967–1968, where he was also Head of the Biology Department.

BIRGER PEJLER was a true naturalist with very broad interests and impressive knowledge of all aspects of nature. He found great pleasure in sharing his knowledge with students and colleagues both during field excursions and in the lecture theatre. After returning from Africa he resumed his position as lecturer in zoology at Uppsala University where he started a course in tropical ecology, developed other courses

in ecology, and wrote a textbook (in Swedish). There is no doubt that these activities sowed the seeds of the later blossoming of ecology at Uppsala University. His broad interests also took him to the volcanic island of Surtsey shortly after its formation as a participant in expeditions studying the development of the terrestrial microfauna. He was often consulted as an expert on water management problems and was a member of the advisory board of the journal *Limnologica*. In 1990, he edited a special issue of *Limnologica* on Nordic Limnology.

In 1972 BIRGER PEJLER was offered a position as Professor in the Department of Limnology, Uppsala University, a position he held until his retirement in 1990. His main task in this period was the supervision of the many PhD students interested in the freshwater fauna. From 1974 to 1980 he also served as Director of the Department of Limnology.

BIRGER PEJLER's main scientific interest was the ecology, biogeography and taxonomy of freshwater Rotatoria. He published important papers on the global distribution of rotifers and on the relation between environmental factors and occurrence of rotifer species. He established close co-operation with Dr. BRUNO BÉRZIŇŠ at Lund University, and they

published several papers together based on Dr. BÉRZIŅŠ' extensive regional studies of rotifers in southern Swedish lakes. Some of these papers appeared after the death of Dr. BÉRZIŅŠ.

BIRGER PEJLER was a leading international specialist on rotifers and a very active participant in the International Rotifer Symposia that have been held every three years since they started in Lunz in 1976. He organised the 3rd International Rotifer Symposium in Uppsala in 1982, and planned to participate in the 8th Symposium in Minneapolis in 1997, but was unfortunately unable to do so because of incipient illness. His contribution to that symposium, "*History of rotifer research in northern Europe*", was, however, printed in

the Symposium proceedings in 1998 and was his last publication.

With the death of BIRGER PEJLER limnology has lost a devoted naturalist, scientist and appreciated teacher, who colleagues and students will remember as a loyal friend with a warm heart and wonderful, soft-spoken, humour.

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